
OLR Bill Analysis

sSB 963 (File 261, as amended by Senate "A")*

AN ACT CONCERNING LIABILITY FOR DAMAGE CAUSED BY A DOG.

SUMMARY:

Currently, an owner is liable when his or her dog hurts a person or damages property unless the person claiming the damage was trespassing, committing a civil tort, or tormenting the dog. The bill adds domesticated dogs and cats ("companion animals") to the definition of "property." And it makes the offending dog's owner liable for damages. When a companion animal is affected, the bill specifies that damages include expenses for veterinary care, the pet's value, and burial expenses where appropriate.

The bill also permits livestock owners to recover veterinary care and burial expenses when their animals (sheep, goats, horses, hogs, cattle, poultry, or domestic rabbits) are injured or killed by dogs. They can already recover the livestock's fair monetary value. By law, the chief municipal officer or agent and affected owner estimate the amount of damages. They must appoint a disinterested third party if they cannot agree.

*Senate Amendment "A" removes liability for economic damages.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2011

COMMITTEE ACTION

Judiciary Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 34 Nay 0 (03/11/2011)

Planning and Development Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 19 Nay 0 (04/18/2011)